

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims in this application, reflects all changes currently being made to the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and all earlier listings of the claims:

1. (currently amended) A control method for a home office system that includes user terminal devices each of which includes a display device, said method comprising:

a virtual spaces providing step, of providing a virtual space on a display device for each user of the user terminal devices;

a monitoring step, of monitoring a physical condition of a user based on an image of the user picked up by a camera; and

a control step, of automatically changing on each display device a display of a virtual space of the user to a display of a virtual space for rest when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result ~~in said monitoring step~~ that the user continuously looked toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time, so that the user may informally communicate with other users present in a common virtual space for rest.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for a home office system that comprises user terminal devices each of which includes a display device, the program comprising:

code for a virtual spaces providing step, of providing a virtual space on a display device for each user of the user terminal devices;

code for a monitoring step, of monitoring a physical condition of a user based on an image of the user picked up by a camera; and

code for a control step, of automatically changing on each display device a display of a virtual space of the user to a display of a virtual space for rest when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result ~~in the monitoring step~~ that the user continuously looked toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time, so that the user may informally communicate with other users present in a common virtual space for rest.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) A control apparatus for a virtual system, which includes plural user terminal devices and a host server device connected to the plural user terminal devices through a communication network, and which creates a virtual space on a display device of each of the plural user terminal devices, said control apparatus comprising:

a virtual space providing unit arranged to provide a virtual space on a display device for each user of the plural user terminal devices;

a monitoring unit arranged to monitor a physical condition of a user based on an image of the user picked up by a camera; and

a control unit arranged to automatically change on each display device a display of a virtual space of the user to a display of another virtual space when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result ~~of said monitoring unit~~ that the user continuously looked toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time, wherein the user moves on at least one of the virtual spaces.

6. (previously presented) An apparatus according to Claim 5, further comprising an imaging unit arranged to image the user, wherein said monitoring unit monitors a state of the user based on an image of the user outputted from said imaging unit.

7. (previously presented) An apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said monitoring unit monitors a face direction of the user, and said control unit moves the user to another virtual space in a case in which the user looks toward the user's user terminal device a predetermined number of times or for a predetermined time.

8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented) An apparatus according to Claim 5, further comprising an imaging unit arranged to image the user, wherein

said imaging unit includes a voice sound information obtaining unit for obtaining voice sound information,

said monitoring unit monitors an emotion of the user based on the voice sound information obtained by the voice sound information obtaining unit, and

said control unit moves the user to another virtual space if it is judged that the user is in a stress condition, in accordance with a recognition result obtained by said monitoring unit.

10. (previously presented) An apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the other virtual space is a space used for taking a cooperative rest.

11. (previously presented) An apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the user's user terminal device includes a transmission unit arranged to transmit information of the user to the host server device, and

said monitoring unit, which is provided in the host server device, monitors a state of the user based on the information transmitted from the user's user terminal device.

12. (currently amended) A control method of a virtual system, which includes plural user terminal devices and a host server device connected to the plural user terminal devices through a communication network, and which creates a virtual space on a display device of each of the plural user terminal devices, said method comprising:

a virtual space providing step, of providing a virtual space on a display device for each user of the plural user terminal devices;

a monitoring step, of monitoring a physical condition of a user based on an image of the user picked up by a camera; and

a control step of automatically changing on each display device a display of a virtual space of the user to a display of another virtual space when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result ~~in said monitoring step~~ that the user continuously looked toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time, so that the user moves among the virtual spaces.

13. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising an image step, of imaging the user, wherein said monitoring step includes monitoring a state of the user based on an image obtained in said image step.

14. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein said monitoring step includes monitoring a face direction of the user, and said control step moves the user to another virtual space in a case in which the user looks toward the user's user terminal device a predetermined number of times or for a predetermined time.

15. (canceled)

16. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 12, further comprising an image step, of imaging the user, wherein

said image step includes a voice sound information obtaining step, of obtaining voice sound information,

said monitoring step includes monitoring an emotion of the user based on the voice sound information obtained in the voice sound information obtaining step, and

said control step includes moving a current virtual space of the user to another virtual space if it is judged that the user is in a stress condition, in accordance with a recognition result obtained in said monitoring step.

17. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 14, wherein the other virtual space is a space used for taking a cooperative rest.

18. (currently amended) A computer-readable storage medium storing a program for a virtual system, which includes plural user terminal devices and a host server device connected to the plural user terminal devices through a communication network, and which creates a virtual space on a display device of each of the plural user terminal devices, the

program comprising:

code for a virtual space providing step, of providing a virtual space on a display device for each user of the plural user terminal devices;

code for a monitoring step, of monitoring a physical condition of a user based on an image of the user picked up by a camera; and

code for a control step of automatically changing on each display device a display of a virtual space of the user to a display of another virtual space when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result ~~in the monitoring step~~ that the user continuously looked toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time, so that the user moves among the virtual spaces.

19. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 13, wherein the user's user terminal device includes a transmission unit arranged to transmit information of the user to the host server device, and said monitoring step includes monitoring a state of the user based on the information transmitted from the user's user terminal device.